

Fifth Annual
REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

**Progress of Agencies
in Implementing**
High Skills, High Wages
*Washington's Comprehensive Plan
for Workforce Training
and Education*

**Fiscal Year 1999
July 1998 to June 1999**

Washington State
Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating
Board



WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

The Vision

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is Washington State's valued and trusted source of leadership for the workforce training and education system.

Mission Statement

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's mission is to bring business, labor, and the public sector together to shape strategies to best meet the workforce training needs of all of Washington's students, workers, and employers in order to create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy.

To fulfill this mission, Board members and staff work together to:

- Advise the Governor and Legislature on workforce training and education policy.
 - Promote a system of workforce training and education that responds to the lifelong learning needs of the current and future workforce.
 - Advocate for the nonbaccalaureate training and education needs of workers and employers.
 - Facilitate innovations in policy.
 - Ensure system quality and accountability by evaluating results and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.
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Introduction

In November 1998, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) revised *High Skills, High Wages: Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education* and submitted the plan to the Governor and the Legislature. The plan identified four long-term goals to guide the workforce development system, objectives for the next two years, and specific recommendations and actions that should be taken toward those goals.

This report fulfills the mandate of RCW 28C.18.080 (3) and (5). The law requires the state agencies represented on the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to develop operating plans that are consistent with High Skills, High Wages. It requires WTECB to provide a report by December 1 each year to appropriate legislative committees of agencies' implementation of the comprehensive plan.

This is the Board's fifth annual report to the Legislature. It covers fiscal year 1999 (July 1998 through June 1999).

The progress covered in this report is from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Employment Security Department (ESD), and WTECB.

The Workforce Development System Is Changing

Since mid 1998, passage of the Workforce Investment Act, amendments to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, and an executive order from Governor Locke, have resulted in important changes in the state's workforce development system. These changes provide the framework for Washington State and its communities to establish a system that meets the needs of the students, job seekers, those who want to further their careers, and businesses. The changes will:

- Improve coordination among workforce development programs, including job training, employment services, adult education and literacy, vocational rehabilitation, and secondary and postsecondary vocational education.
- Provide greater flexibility to the state and its communities to design and administer a high-quality workforce development system that meets local needs.
- Improve customer service by providing students, job seekers, and employers with one-stop access to a variety of career-related employment and training services available within a community.

- Measure how well workforce development programs succeed in preparing people for jobs and making this information available so consumers can choose the training program and provider that best fits their needs.

In his executive order, signed September 17, 1999, Governor Locke directed the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to work with the operating agencies of the state's workforce development system, the Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Labor and Industries, local workforce development councils, and other organizations to prepare and carry out a strategic plan for the state's workforce development system and to meet challenges facing the system. Results of this collaborative work will be covered in next year's report.

Recommendations of High Skills, High Wages: Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education

To reach our vision of high skills, high wages, we must plan our journey carefully. To get there, we will have to pull together. We cannot afford the high cost of duplication, fragmentation, and working at cross-purposes. To arrive at our vision, we must have a clear map—a set of goals and objectives—that sets our direction and guides programs of the workforce training system. The following defines our long-term goals, our objectives for the next two years, and the specific actions that should be taken.

The four goals the system should work to accomplish over the next five to ten years are:

- Goal 1 ►** K-12 education will prepare students for both further education and work. Students will graduate from high school knowing and being able to do what is needed to succeed at both higher education and the world of work.
- Goal 2 ►** The gap between economic demand and the supply of postsecondary technical training will be closed. The state's adult training programs will produce the number of workers with the skills Washington employers need.
- Goal 3 ►** The training system will be a coherent and integrated system of customer services. We will build a network of training and related services that provides customers with easy access and portability among and between programs and avoids unnecessary duplication.
- Goal 4 ►** Training programs will be accountable for results. Every workforce training and education program will have measured results and quality improvement efforts to improve those results.

In order to make progress on these four goals, the state should achieve the following objectives and specific actions over the next two years.

Goal 1

K-12 education will prepare students for both further education and work.

Students make important decisions during high school, including what to do after their high schools years—go to college, go to work, enter an apprenticeship, or enter vocational training. Schools are implementing programs that help students better understand their options. Using federal School-to-Work grant money, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction provided funds to five high schools that are demonstrating ways to organize their courses and their structures to facilitate effective student transition to life beyond high school. Nooksack Valley, Pasco, Sumner, Wapato, and West Seattle High Schools have discovered the importance of strong relationships with business and labor, other educators, and community representatives. They are involving community partners with education to help students better understand the choices and opportunities that await them. While the programs at each high school reflect different points of emphasis, all are united in their commitment to the four “P’s”:

- Learning **Pathways** – an organized sequence of classes and activities that contribute to preparation for occupations of a similar kind (social services or technology, for example).
- A Learning **Portfolio** – a collection of student work and achievements used by the student to document progress along the pathway.
- A Culminating Senior **Project** – a project completed by the student illustrating his or her pathway work, usually presented to a panel of community reviewers for evaluation.
- A 13th Year **Plan** – a student’s individual plan for the year after graduation, including the steps needed to accomplish the plan’s goal (such as completing the first classes of an articulated program, preparing to meet baccalaureate admission standards, or earning industry-endorsed skill certification).

Pasco High School, for example, demonstrates business-school partnerships and work-based learning projects. The school partnered with local businesses to establish projects in which students built jet boats and houses. These projects have resulted in integrated curriculum and involvement of students from a wide variety of classes (advanced metals technology, advanced woods, accounting, advanced agriculture science, advanced sewing, family and consumer sciences, algebra and geometry, and marketing, for example). These projects enable students to gain a wide range of competencies by applying what they learned in the classroom (i.e., math skills, reading blue prints, marketing, landscaping) to products sold in the community. The partnership that helped start these projects formed a community based nonprofit organization to oversee them.

Objective 1

Improve career-related learning during high school.

| RECOMMENDATION 1 | PROGRESS |
|--|---|
| A. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) should support high school pilot programs with a combined focus on academic and work skills. | <i>In Progress</i> ► Pilot projects at Nooksack Valley, Sumner, Wapato, West Seattle, and Pasco high schools each received \$150,000 in grant funds. |
| OSPI should also support community partnerships of business, labor, and education for work-based learning and articulation of secondary and post-secondary vocational-technical education. | <i>In Progress</i> ► The pilot high schools are part of multidistrict consortia. Each consortium received additional funding averaging \$100,000 to support other schools in the consortium as well as the pilot high schools. An additional \$2.62 million in federal grant funds will be distributed through a competitive process to the remaining STW consortia in the fall of 1999. |
| B. The State Board of Education should include workplace skills (such as good work habits, teamwork, and accepting supervision) in its new performance- | <i>In Progress</i> ► WTECB provided a definition of workplace skills to the State Board of Education's Graduation Requirements and Diploma (GRAD) Committee. The State Board expects to adopt new performance-based graduation requirements by May 2000. |

Objective 2

Improve career guidance in Washington schools.

| RECOMMENDATION 2 | PROGRESS |
|---|---|
| OSPI should, in cooperation with state and local partners, develop and implement a plan to improve career guidance for Washington's young people. | <i>In Progress</i> ► OSPI is developing a career guidance improvement plan. The work involves career guidance professionals, teachers, administrators, and postsecondary institutions. |

Objective 3

Establish an accountability system for K-12 education that measures students' preparation for both higher education and work.

| RECOMMENDATION 3 | PROGRESS |
|--|--|
| <p>The Governor and Legislature should enact an accountability system that:</p> <p>A. Reports student post-high school experience in higher education and employment in the School Performance Report and later adds measures of post-high school experience to the accountability system.</p> <p>B. Includes a measure of the student dropout rate.</p> | <p>No Progress ► The 1999 Legislature approved a measure to establish the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission to: adopt goals in reading, writing, science, and math; to identify schools in need of assistance; to establish recognition criteria; and to identify intervention measures needed. The commission has no explicit authority or direction to consider post-high school experience as a factor or indicator for any of these elements.</p> <p>No Progress ► Along with demographic data, dropout rates and attendance are only to be reported to the public by OSPI and schools. There is no explicit authority or direction to consider reduction of dropout rates as a goal or for purposes of assistance, recognition, or intervention.</p> |

Goal 2

The gap between economic demand and the supply of postsecondary technical training will be closed.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is working with partners to develop skill standards for competency-based education. Nineteen skill standards projects covering 47 occupations are in various stages of completion. Skill standards have been completed for information technology, allied oral health, cosmetology, telecommunications, secondary wood products, travel and tourism, food processing, chiropractic technicians, chemical dependency counselors, and retail/wholesale trade. Projects underway or nearing completion include skill standards for manufacturing, agriculture, natural resources technology, law enforcement, hearing aid technology, early childhood education, vocational instruction, para-education, and optician technology. Washington also has worked with California and Oregon to develop portable skill certificates for the retail and financial services industries that integrate academic and industry-defined standards. Another project is building assessment tools around skill standards for education and industry training programs in electronics.

Increases in the two-year college system's biennial appropriation for new workforce program development by the 1999 Legislature will enable colleges to build upon this work and expand the development and use of skill standards-based applications. Strategies to support further expansion and implementation include:

- Continuing to increase the number of state-endorsed skill standards, emphasizing high-demand industries and occupational clusters.
- Supporting development of standards-based applications for employers, K-12 and postsecondary education.
- Developing a certification model for issuing portable, industry-endorsed skill certificates.
- Designing a standards and application updating process to stay current with industry needs.
- Providing training and technical assistance to facilitate implementation.

Objective 4

Increase the number of students who enroll in and complete postsecondary vocational-technical programs.

| RECOMMENDATION 4 | PROGRESS |
|---|--|
| A. The Governor and Legislature should establish an annual fund of up to \$9 million for scholarships covering up to two years tuition and fees for students in a high-demand postsecondary vocational-technical program. | No Progress ► A bill to fund scholarships for students attending high-demand postsecondary vocational-technical programs, SB 5589, did not pass in the 1999 Legislature. However, the Governor sought and the Legislature approved funding for two-year Promise Scholarships for high-achieving middle-income students. Recipients can use Promise Scholarships for post-secondary academic or vocational-technical programs. |
| B. The Governor and Legislature should establish an annual fund of up to \$0.5 million to assist low-income individuals with costs associated with entering high-demand apprenticeship programs. | No Progress ► This was proposed in SB 5589, which was passed by the Senate Labor and Workforce Development Committee, but progressed no further. |

Objective 5

Increase high-wage technical programs at community and technical colleges.

| RECOMMENDATION 5 | PROGRESS |
|---|--|
| The Governor and Legislature should fund a \$6 million annual grant program through SBCTC to establish new programs in high-demand, high-wage technical fields. | Limited Progress ► The 1999-2001 budget provides \$4.5 million for a number of high-demand initiatives, including \$1.5 million for grants to expand information technology and computer science programs, \$1.45 million for high-demand occupational programs, and \$1.15 million for equipment in high-demand vocational and technology dependent courses. |

Objective 6

Increase state investment in job-linked customized training.

| RECOMMENDATION 6 | PROGRESS |
|--|---|
| The Governor and Legislature should appropriate \$10 million annually in job-linked customized training by expanding the Job Skills Program. | Limited ► Progress The Job Skills Program (JSP) was transferred to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges by the 1999 Legislature, with the agreement that an additional \$2 million would be transferred from the worker retraining appropriation to the JSP program. Customized training capacity in the college system is being expanded by: (1) implementing preemployment training using WorkFirst funds, and (2) allowing customized training with worker retraining funds in college-based allocations. |

Objective 7

Enhance the skills and earnings of low-income workers by increasing instruction in occupational skills.

| RECOMMENDATION 7 | PROGRESS |
|--|--|
| A. The Office of Adult Literacy and SBCTC should continue to strengthen the integration of adult basic skills instruction with occupational skills training, work experience, and computer training. | In Progress ► The five-year adult literacy plan adopted by the SBCTC includes steps to strengthen integration. Grants for service providers included a set-aside for integration and required leveraging funds with a vocational skills provider. |

Objective 7 (cont.)

Enhance the skills and earnings of low-income workers by increasing instruction in occupational skills.

| RECOMMENDATION 7 | PROGRESS |
|---|--|
| B. Services for low-income individuals currently provided through the Job Training Partnership Act Title II should offer participants, whenever appropriate, the opportunity to enter and complete vocational-technical programs at community and technical colleges, private career schools, or apprenticeships. | Completed ► The state Job Training Partnership Act Plan was revised to reflect this policy. Added to the plan was a state performance standard to measure increases in occupational skills training. |
| C. WorkFirst should use funds from savings in case load reductions to support wage progression among public assistance recipients and other low-income adults by combining occupational skills training with work. | In Progress ► WorkFirst is using case load savings to provide one year of vocational training for clients working 20 hours per week, and support services for workers in training for two more years. |

Objective 8

Increase employer investments in employee training.

| RECOMMENDATION 8 | PROGRESS |
|--|---|
| The Governor and Legislature should enact tax incentives for employer investments in training their employees. | No Progress ► A number of bills were introduced, but no legislation was enacted in the 1999 session. |

Objective 9

Help small businesses gain better access to the workforce training system.

RECOMMENDATION 9

PROGRESS

The Governor and Legislature should, using existing entities, establish a public-private partnership of local brokers to connect small businesses to workforce training programs and resources.

No Progress ► (Note: The Governor's Executive Order of September 1999 on workforce development requires local workforce development councils to provide for a coordinated and responsive system of outreach to employers.)

Objective 10

Use the K-20 Technology Network to provide workforce training in rural areas.

RECOMMENDATION 10

PROGRESS

The Community and Technical College system should design and implement ways of using the K-20 Technology Network to provide rural areas with training linked to economic development efforts.

In Progress ► Community and technical colleges have contributed to a \$375,000 fund to develop 20 vocational courses for distance learning. The focus will be on the high demand fields of health, business, and technology. Courses will be available beginning in January 2000.

Goal 3

The training system will be a coherent and integrated system of customer services.

Work has been completed in the past year building the local foundations for WorkSource, Washington's One-Stop System. WorkSource helps businesses and individuals access a wide range of employment and training related services. During the past year, local partnerships developed business plans, completed cross-agency staff training, and worked to jointly define relationships and develop a system of service centers and affiliate sites. Ten communities established WorkSource Centers after completing a validation process that involved members of the business and labor communities and other interested parties. WorkSource Centers are open in 10 of the 12 service delivery areas in the state.

At the state level, the quality of state labor market, training and employment resource information available on the Internet was improved, and a common intake form was developed for service providers. Standards were adopted for listing core services of all partnerships on the state WorkSource Internet web site. Strategies were implemented to help businesses and individuals seeking employment and training services recognize WorkSource and understand how it can meet their needs. The state continues to explore adoption of the U.S. Department of Labor technology system for case management and data collection.

In the coming year, 14 more WorkSource Centers will be validated, an information system will be selected, and a consumer report system, where customers can see the results of training programs, will be put in place. WorkSource will continue to evolve during the next few years as it becomes the centerpiece for employment and training service delivery under the federal Workforce Investment Act. Local elected officials, local workforce development councils, and local partners are fashioning WorkSource to meet their needs and to continue integration of services by many providers.

Objective 11

Integrate the Workforce Investment Act into the state's workforce development system.

RECOMMENDATION 11

PROGRESS

WTECB will develop and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature regarding mechanisms for integrating the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 into Washington's workforce development system.

Completed ► WTECB developed and made recommendations on implementation of WIA in this state. Implementation is in progress.

Objective 12

Implement a One-Stop Career Development System for providing employment-related services.

RECOMMENDATION 12

PROGRESS

A. The Governor and Legislature should enact legislation authorizing the Employment Security Department to enter into data-sharing agreements with partners of the One-Stop Career Development System.

No Progress ► HB 1955 on data sharing was introduced and eventually folded into SB 5533, the bill dealing with state implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act. SB 5533 did not pass during the 1999 regular or special session.

B. The Executive Policy Council of One-Stop should ensure that the One-Stop information system enables program operators to share information on participant services, and that participant information is cumulative, and common intake and assessments and other common tools are used to the maximum reasonable extent.

In Progress ► Business requirements for the WorkSource information system that address these policies have been identified. DOL's one-stop operating system is being evaluated to determine if it meets the business requirements. However, there will be no requirement for a common comprehensive assessment tool to be used where intensive services under WIA are provided.

Objective 13

Expand the use of portable skill standards in workforce development programs.

RECOMMENDATION 13

PROGRESS

- A. SBCTC should increase the number of industry-designed skill standards, develop a process for updating existing standards, and develop skills standards-based curricula and assessments.

In Progress ► Fifteen of 19 skill standards covering 47 occupations have been completed. SBCTC is using a \$460,000 appropriation to establish new skill standards and to develop curriculum and assessments. SBCTC includes skill standards as a key criterion for awarding grants to colleges to develop programs in high demand fields.

- B. OSPI should support the development of skill standards-based curricula and assessments to incorporate skill standards in secondary schools.

In Progress ► OSPI is revising secondary vocational education program standards to connect career preparation to industry certification. Also, skill standards development will be encouraged in the request for proposal process for grants to School-to-Work consortia.

- C. WTECB will convene a working committee to review recent efforts to identify, assess, and credential general workplace skills and make recommendations for next steps leading to a portable credential of workplace competency.

No Progress ► No committee has been convened to date (planned to follow Unified Plan completion).

Objective 14

Develop a new State Plan for Adult Literacy that will improve efficiency and effectiveness of adult basic skills education.

RECOMMENDATION 14

PROGRESS

The Office of Adult Literacy and SBCTC should develop a new Washington State Plan for Adult Literacy, whether as a stand-alone plan, or as part of a unified plan for workforce development as permitted under the newly enacted Workforce Investment Act.

Completed ► A five-year plan was developed by the Office of Adult Literacy, endorsed by WTECB in March 1999 and adopted by SBCTC. The plan will be revised to reflect new and emerging policy directions in the state's new unified plan under WIA.

Objective 15

Provide for regional coordination of workforce training and education.

RECOMMENDATION 15

PROGRESS

WTECB will consider the lessons learned from the voluntary regional alliance pilot as one source of information as it prepares its recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act's provisions on local workforce investment boards.

In Progress ► The regional alliance pilot will be completed in fall of 1999 with the publication of a southwest Washington Strategic Plan for Workforce Development. The pilot will report on "lessons learned" which will be useful to local councils as they prepare for their responsibilities under WIA.

Goal 4

Training programs will be accountable for results.

In July 1998, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board published results of its second biennial evaluation of the state's nine major workforce development programs in *Workforce Training Results—1998* and *Workforce Training: Supply, Demand and Gaps—1998*. The evaluation examined how well past program participants are doing in terms of wages and employment, and the customer satisfaction of program participants and the employers that hired them.

The evaluation findings showed that most people who participated in one of the state's major workforce training programs found jobs and most of the jobs were related to the training they received. However, many employers were not satisfied with the quality of the general workplace skills of newly hired workers who obtained training in one of the programs. WTECB found that the state's hot economy caused an increasing shortage of skilled workers and determined that the shortage was most severe for employers seeking workers with two to three years of postsecondary vocational training. Additionally, the Board identified a number of areas where programs can improve and recommended actions the Governor and Legislature should take to reduce the gap between supply and demand for workforce training.

Following passage of the federal Workforce Investment Act and the amendments to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, WTECB and its Performance Management for Continuous Improvement work group began identifying state core performance indicators. These indicators will be used in addition to required federal indicators to measure results that are important across workforce development programs. Any incentives, sanctions, and intervention developed for programs funded by the federal acts will be linked to core performance indicators.

State core indicators for measuring program performance approved on a preliminary basis by the Board in June 1999:

- Employment.
- Earnings.
- Employer satisfaction.
- Educational attainment.

Following review and comment by stakeholders during the summer, WTECB will take final action on a set of state core performance indicators in the fall of 1999.

Objective 16

Extend the measurement of results to more workforce training and education programs.

| RECOMMENDATION 16 | PROGRESS |
|--|---|
| A. OSPI should provide for more comprehensive collection and maintenance of data required to evaluate the results of secondary vocational-technical education. | <i>In Progress</i> ► OSPI is developing internal capability to continue and expand the Graduate Follow-up survey. |
| B. The Office of Adult Literacy should provide for the collection and maintenance of data required to evaluate results from noncollege providers of adult basic skills education. | <i>Completed</i> ► The Office of Adult Literacy implemented a computer-based system in the 1998-99 school year that provides for the collection and maintenance of this data. |
| C. WTECB will require licensed private career schools to collect and maintain data necessary to evaluate their results. | <i>Completed</i> ► Regulations were adopted in November of 1998 that require private career schools, beginning in July 2000, to report the necessary data. |
| D. As the subcabinet leading WorkFirst, the state's welfare-to-work initiative, continues to refine the program, it should review the definitions for the performance measures for employment and earnings for consistency with the measures used for the training system so that practitioners are supported as they coordinate services to low-income clients. | <i>In Progress</i> ► The Governor's Executive Order on workforce development requires WTECB to establish performance measures for the wage-progression strategy for low-income workers the Board develops as part of the state's strategic plan for workforce development. Performance measures based on the state's Performance Management for Continuous Improvement framework are used to assess college-training programs for WorkFirst recipients. |

Objective 17

Implement a consumer report system of training provider results that is readily accessible to participants, potential participants, and employers.

| RECOMMENDATION 17 | PROGRESS |
|--|--|
| The Employment Security Department should, in cooperation with WTECB and the programs to be included in the reports, implement a consumer report system. | <i>In Progress</i> ► Development of the consumer report system is on target for implementation in late April or early May 2000. |

Objective 18

The state's workforce training and education programs should increase their use of quality management principles to improve continuously.

| RECOMMENDATION 18 | PROGRESS |
|--|---|
| Workforce training organizations should, consistent with the principles of the Governor's Executive Order on Quality Improvement, complete quality self-assessments and use the findings to improve performance. | <i>In Progress</i> ► To be certified, WorkSource operators must be engaged in continuous improvement. Feedback from colleges, industry, and others led to revisions in SBCTC's Workforce Education Unit that improved the board's ability to meet the needs of colleges, students, industry, and other public and private workforce development partners. |